

**Vision For Fishers**

What is God's assignment for Fishers? How will we do it? What will success look like? A new shared vision helps us all see the answers and BE the answers!

Page 2

**Journey Of Growth Capital Campaign Wrap-up**

Celebrating our accomplishments and looking ahead to new challenges.

Page 3



**State Of The Church**

We share where we are as a Church and the NextSteps forward in our journey together.

Page 4

**NextSteps Details**

Even in challenging economic times God wants His Church to grow; here's how Fishers can!

Page 4



**A Win-**

**Your Part**

It's As Simple As 1-2-3.

Page 5

**Win\_Win From Our Texas CEF Friends.**

Read more about how you can get free, easy money for Fishers--even while you earn a great return.

Page 6

**Questions & Answers**

Answers to your questions about the NextSteps plan.

Page 7



# NEXT STEPS

*A Mission. A Vision. A Map.*

*A Mission To Make Disciples. A Vision Of Doing That Mission At Fishers. A Map To Show The Way. That's The Purpose Of This NextSteps Newsletter.*

## Our Mission Is God's Mission

*It's Time To Make Disciples!*

Pastor McNamara has recently challenged us to pray, work and plan to be a church that "makes disciples who make a difference." What does that mean?

It means the reason that Jesus created the Church 2000 years ago was to save His people from sin and save them for the purpose of joining His saving work.

"The mindset of 'going to church' has to be re-shaped," Jerry shared. "If we are going to glorify God by fulfilling Jesus'

**NextSteps is a vision and action plan for growing God's Kingdom at Fishers and raising up the resources to achieve that growth.**

Great Commission we have to BE the Church. That means we love, serve and DO what God's people are supposed to do. Merely coming on Sundays isn't the fulfillment of God's plan for His Church."

*Focus And Unity--What We Can Do Working Together*

Fishers has experienced times of growth before when there was clear focus on the mission, strong unity around a plan, and clear understanding of the assignments everyone had to accomplish. We believe NextSteps can help us glorify God, grow His Church, and change people's eternity.

*Responding To God With NextSteps*

This newsletter is our call to you and every member of the Fishers family. It's time for clarity! **It's time to act!** It's time to follow God with grateful obedience, taking the NextSteps of growth He reveals to us.

**We believe that NextSteps is a focused plan to help us take those steps with Jesus, and we hope you will read on to learn more--including how you can take those NextSteps with us!**



# Vision For Fishers

*Seeing How God's Great Commission Will Live And Be Expressed At Fishers*

## Mission Projects



We HAVE to change in the area of missions. It's time Fishers committed not just youth, but also adults to serve our community and share Christ with them. We intend to recruit more adults to serve as mentors in our continued Afterschool Outreach. We will also add a children's ministry targeted mission project. Lastly, we plan to greatly expand our partnerships with area ministries such as East Fort Bend Human Needs and LINC Houston; sending out teams to serve the least, the last, and the lost in Jesus' name!

## Train Members For The Work



The strategy of hiring our way to growth doesn't work in today's economy and it isn't how God planned His church to work anyway. Ephesians 4:11-12 reveals that staff equip God's people for the work of ministry. So the way we can expand our church is by investing training and support into our members. We intend to do just that in the strategically vital areas of Small Group Ministry and our new member process. We'll find the best resources possible to equip our best resource--God's faithful people at Fishers!

## A Church Of Small Groups



In the last twenty years, churches with intentional small group ministry have consistently seen growth. It's simple: inspiration and teaching may make up our worship services, but *life change happens best in small groups*. In a group, relationships of love and support lead people to grow closer to each other and closer to Christ. Our world needs that, so Fishers will dramatically expand and improve our small groups ministry. We plan to extensively train members (like in Stephen Ministry) to lead these efforts.

## From Guest To Member



Enhancing our follow-up on the guests God brings to us will grow our Fishers family significantly. It means follow-up so people don't get lost or fall through the cracks. It will take lots of people with training and organization to improve our work here, but we already have the most important things needed: wonderful, motivated, loving members! With a stronger, seamless, supported system of follow-up, guests will feel moved by the love of God's people and they will make Fishers their church family. *We can do this!*

## Raise Expectations



This may be our most ambitious goal of all! We want to communicate higher expectations of our members, including weekly worship attendance, serving in one ministry a year, giving an average of two hours a week in service to church or community, regular attendance in a small group, and growing in financial giving to the Lord. Over the coming months, we intend to revise our current new member class, and take other steps to call people to a deeper commitment to Christ and Kingdom life.

Want to learn more details about any of these vision pieces? Watch for our upcoming NextSteps presentations being offered to small groups and to everyone in our congregation. Learn more at our blog, [news.fishersofmen.org](http://news.fishersofmen.org).

# Journey Of Growth Wrap-Up

*Celebrating what we've done to grow Fishers, Here's our plans to conclude our current capital campaign, and how we will extend our Kingdom growth through our NextSteps Program.*



In 2008, Fishers Of Men Lutheran Church embarked on a **Journey Of Growth**.

This *Journey Of Growth, Step Of Faith (JOGSOF)* Capital Campaign had a goal of raising as much as possible in pledges and contributions toward Fishers first building program in nine years. So many people prayed, dreamed, planned, and participated! When the pledges were counted in May 2008, 107 families pledged more than \$1.7 million to this expansion work. What a "Yea, God!" moment!

Now three years later, we celebrate what has been accomplished, and the future that has been provided for our church family through this campaign. Fishers enjoys a wonderful 24,000 sq. ft. expansion for ministry and as a resource to share with our community.

But no *Journey Of Growth* would have been possible without the sacrificial giving of God's people. Behind every *Step Of Faith* and every dollar given there is a story. *So many stories!* Some members delayed car

purchases to enable God's church to build without delay. Other members doubled their regular giving to make a *Journey Of Growth* gift. Some sold stock, others scaled back vacations or even limited wedding plans to help the Fishers family take bold steps of faith. All the glory belongs to God, but we can never forget the sacrifices so many made.

As we reach the conclusion of the pledge time for

*Journey Of Growth, Step Of Faith*, we intend to honor everyone who pledged and all who gave to God's Kingdom work at Fishers through *Journey Of Growth*, and we hope the stories of the pledgers inspire everyone else to join us in giving toward the **NextSteps** for our church.

*Journey Of Growth* got us started; now we need **NextSteps**. Our leadership has prayerfully approved moving forward with a new emphasis on vision, growth, and giving. This new initiative (detailed throughout this newsletter) will launch at the end of May, and all confirmed members are lovingly encouraged to pledge

their support. Members who still wish to fulfill a **Journey Of Growth** pledge are encouraged to do so by June 30 when that campaign will be closed (*see page 7's Q&A for important details*).

Pledges to **NextSteps** enables our church to move forward in ministry and with a stronger financial future--whether it is a new pledge or a continuation of a former *Journey Of Growth* pledge.

Fishers members wishing to verify the status of a *JOGSOF* pledge are encouraged to contact our *Journey Of Growth* pledge leader, Alan Grieger. Additional questions can be answered at one of our upcoming **NextSteps** presentations.

Take some **NextSteps** with us--to the glory of God!

**We hope the stories of the pledgers inspire everyone else to join us in giving toward the NextSteps for our church.**



**"Journey Of Growth, Step Of Faith" is our three-year capital program (2008-2010); NextSteps is our new two-year emphasis on vision, giving, and growth. More at**

# NextSteps Details

*Here's How Fishers Looks Today, The Specific, Proposed Goals Of NextSteps, And The Part You Can Play In This Vital Fishers Family Plan.*



## State Of The Church

*In the briefest possible way, here are the positives, the challenges, and the opportunities for Fishers Of Men Lutheran Church*

### The Positives

Fishers has many positives, but we'll highlight four here:

- Wonderful, caring people
- Great new facilities
- Excellent staff & leadership
- Fruitful programs

### The Challenges

To highlight some key challenges, we would share:

- After a successful season of giving and building, Fishers seems to have settled into a "let's-take-it-easy-for-a-while" mindset.
- We are approaching the end of fiscal year 2010 (June 30) with a \$70,000 deficit that will require us to draw from savings.
- Increased operating costs (larger mortgage, utilities, and other costs) mean that our budget for FY 2011 instantly increases by \$109,000. To grow any ministries, such increases would be on top of that.
- Members aren't fully aware of our vision.

**NextSteps is our opportunity to reverse these challenges by using our positive strengths and a clear vision and action plan to move ahead with everyone's help.**

## The NextSteps Plan

*The Parish Leadership Team, Staff, and NextSteps Task Force offer the following proposal (even more information will be offered in our in-person NextSteps presentations see the blog and calendar for dates and times)*

### A Vision That Moves People...

- out into mission
- closer together in small groups
- into trained ministry with greater responsibility
- from guests into engaged members

### A Budget That Empowers Our Vision & Action Plan

- covers our increased operating costs
- adds \$51,000 to fund new initiatives that will bring new growth and strength to Fishers

### A Special Offering Challenge That Asks Members to:

- increase their regular offering
- give to a special two-year debt-reduction plan that lowers our mortgage balance by nearly 10% (\$300,000); lowering our monthly payment by almost \$2,000

We have a great church!

We have a solid action plan that lowers debt and makes our church stronger through improved and new ministries.

We need your help! Make a pledge and give of yourself and your resources through NextSteps!

## Your Part In Our Plan

*Here's where we show you how to take these NextSteps with us! We humbly ask you to work through these steps*

### 1. Count Your Blessings of

- family & friends!
- health & home!
- all your resources!*
- God's family at Fishers sharing inspiring music and messages, ministry for all ages, and a family of grace and caring!

### 2. Examine Your Response To Date

- Does it reflect your thankfulness to God and your faith?
- Does it reflect your real ability to give back (time, abilities, and finances)?
- Am I meeting needs in my church--of today and tomorrow?*
- Are there choices and changes I could make to do more in love?

### 3. Pray! Ask God to help you see how you could pledge an increase.

### 4. Respond!

- Make *NextSteps* pledges of your time, service, and finances including
  - increasing your main offering
  - ongoing giving toward our debt reduction

# Your Part In NextSteps!

It's As Easy As 1-2-3. Here's where we ask you to respond as a thankful child of God. Here's where we ask you to **BE** the Church and **DO** your part in love to move God's Kingdom forward at Fishers Of Men!



## Pledge To Serve In One Ministry A Year

**Pledge a commitment to volunteer in at least one ministry a year.** Whether being a Sunday Team member (greeter, usher, communion preparation, etc.) or mentoring youth or children, or leading in a small group or any one of 20+ other ministries at Fishers, your pledge here is your commitment to **be** the Church through your service! *Note: we will be publishing a list of these positions online soon!*



## Pledge Two Hours Of Your Time

**We ask all confirmed members to pledge an average of two hours a week in service** to our church, a community effort, or simply to your neighbor. This doesn't have to be burdensome or complicated. You might volunteer at a Habitat For Humanity Build and spend six hours there on a Saturday, and then be a volunteer at our Cube Afterschool Outreach for two hours one time a month. Voila! You just served an average of eight hours, and you just did the world some good. **Make the time pledge and make a difference!**



## Make Financial Pledges & Gifts

**Pledge 1: When God's love and blessings meet your trust and thankfulness, an offering pledge is born! This pledge is your love-response to God, your regular offering to the Lord! We encourage following the biblical model of giving God a "first fruits" percentage of your regular income, and we humbly encourage you to pledge a tithe (10%) or to increase your current offering by an additional 1% of your income, or as much as possible toward a full tithe.**

**Pledge 2: A pledge, over and above your regular offering, supporting our NextSteps goal (details are on page 4) of reducing our indebtedness by \$300,000, or about 10%.**

## Texas CEF, A Kingdom Partner That Creates Win-Win-Win Situations Every Day!

The Church Extension Fund (CEF) of the Texas District LCMS provides a safe place to invest our *treasures* to advance the Kingdom of God through loans to build churches and schools. Fishers Of Men has a loan with CEF that has enabled us to build our new, wonderful facility. We can keep our loan interest rate low and qualify for substantial annual cash rebates by increasing our individual and congregational deposits in CEF.



### So if I invest in CEF what is in it for the Kingdom of God?

CEF make loans to LCMS congregations and schools to build facilities for worship, outreach, fellowship and education of our children. God's Kingdom grows and churches borrow at rates below commercial lending.

### What's in it for Fishers of Men Lutheran Church and Preschool?

CEF investments enable us to qualify for the lowest loan rate possible on our current \$3.27 million loan balance. Our investments in CEF are \$843,301 or 26% of our loan balance. If our investments are above 28% we get the low CEF index loan rate. Below 28% we pay additional interest. If our deposits are above 50 % of the loan balance we receive a 0.5% cash rebate. If the balance is between 75% and 100% we could get a 1.0% rebate. If our deposits exceed 100% we earn an annual rebate of \$32,735. Only 10% of our communicants are CEF investors. There is growth potential. *Won't you consider being an investor and helping us get the cheapest money (free!) we will ever find?*

### What's in it for me as an investor?

You get a very competitive rate on savings, CDs and IRAs. Your investments are safe in the good hands of CEF managers who oversee more than \$1 billion in assets. You help further the Kingdom of God by helping build churches and schools.



**Remember, your S&L, credit union, bank or brokerage house does not build churches and schools. But you can--even as you earn a great return on investment for yourself!**

To start your own Win-Win-win situation, visit Texas CEF online at [www.texascef.org](http://www.texascef.org) (to see rates, get more information, etc.), or call Steve Block at 1-888-951-1CEF.

## NextSteps For Fishers!

## Our NextSteps For God's Glory!



*In thankful response to God's love and blessings, I pledge the following:*



**TO SERVE** within one ministry team a year.



**TO GIVE TIME**, an average of two hours weekly in service to my church, community, or neighbor

3



**TO MAKE FINANCIAL OFFERINGS**

**My pledged annual offering to the Lord will be \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

Which works out to be \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per week.

*This represents a tithe (10%) of my income.*

*I am increasing my offering and working toward giving a higher percentage to the Lord of all!*

**My pledged gift and support for our debt reduction will be \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

(Year one: \_\_\_\_\_ Year two: \_\_\_\_\_)

Please contact me to begin/increase a Texas CEF investment.

**Take  
NextSteps With  
Us...To God's  
Glory!**

**Printed Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Offering Envelope # (if known): \_\_\_\_\_**



**NEXT  
STEPS**

**Q&A**

**NextSteps For  
Fishers!  
NextSteps For God's  
Glory!**

*What's The idea behind NextSteps?*

Our leaders consider our recent building campaign to have been well-named. Our *Journey Of Growth, Step Of Faith* campaign allowed us to start a journey of growth as a church after almost 10 years of plateau. We were enabled to build a wonderful building, but it really was just a first "step of faith." Now it is time for our "next steps" including a unifying vision, reducing debt, and moving forward with some "growth" efforts (in our upcoming budget and detailed also on page 4). These "growth" initiatives help our members grow stronger as disciples and our church grow bigger through better ministry to our guests and community. It takes the resources of God's people to take all these "next steps," so our new **NextSteps** stewardship project was launched.

*Why is a written pledge so important?  
Can't this just be between God and me?*

A written pledge makes a commitment to God more real. It is not a binding contract, but we tend to take more seriously the commitments we are willing to write down. Many of us make New Year's resolutions but quickly break them. Written pledges just mean more--especially when they are ones we make in faithful and thankful response to the Lord. For more, consider reflecting on Psalm 116:16-19.

*Who will see my pledge? How will I be notified of my progress on my financial pledges? How will I notify Fishers of progress on my other pledges--of serving and of time given?*

A very limited group of our Stewardship Team will input all pledges and provide quarterly reports (which would reveal progress toward your general offering pledge and **NextSteps** pledge). As now, everything will be done maintaining strict confidentiality. We are exploring ways to provide members with secure, confidential access to their pledge and contributions information electronically, but haven't finalized that. Similarly, we are developing our system for reporting your serving and your pledge of time given to church and/or community projects.

*Will any new staff be added at Fishers?  
Are there any plans to use NextStep dollars to call an additional pastor?*

Our current vision is to use existing staff and other training opportunities to prepare God's people to take on more ministry and grow our church God's way! We are considering small stipends to enable members to get some support for giving substantial hours to a key ministry. We know there is interest in calling an additional pastor, and that will be looked at again as we approach 2012. Meanwhile many needs will be met by our trained members, such as through Stephen Ministry.

*What if this NextSteps campaign doesn't reach all the goals?*

If **NextSteps** doesn't reach all its goals we believe that it's better to have set goals and achieved some rather than simply accept an unchanged status quo.

*I haven't finished my pledge to Journey Of Growth, Step Of Faith (and I am uncertain if I will by the June 30 conclusion). I view that pledge as important--between God and me. What should I do?*

We respect you so much for giving to God through "Journey Of Growth" and striving to honor your pledge! We can give a more detailed answer in our presentations or one-on-one, but if you wish to mark your check or a portion of your check as "Building Fund-JOGSOF," those contributions will go directly to our Texas CEF loan (the original target of JOGSOF) and will not be used for any of the **NextSteps** efforts. We respectfully hope that at some point you would join everyone who supports the vision behind **NextSteps** and make pledges and offerings there as well.

*I still have questions, where can I get answers?*

We want you to feel fully informed about our **NextSteps** vision and action project. We encourage you to attend one of upcoming **NextSteps** presentations (see our church calendar and our blog [news.fishersofmen.org](http://news.fishersofmen.org), OR call one of the contact people on the next page.

## NextSteps Information

This newsletter details our vision, action and stewardship emphasis for the future of Fishers Of Men Lutheran Church. We hope you will read it prayerfully and check out the other resources we have for **NextSteps** (see our website for videos, presentations, and more). We are making presentations about NextSteps to many groups at Fishers throughout May 2010. To participate in a presentation, see the schedule on our website or visit our blog, [news.fishersofmen.org](http://news.fishersofmen.org)

**We also welcome your questions about NextSteps. Contact the leaders of our church or the Stewardship Task Force**

## Contact

**Jerry Lohr** — NextSteps Stewardship Task Force Chair

**Keith Morgenroth** — Stewardship Task Force & Executive Team

**Alan Sanderson** — Fishers Stewardship Team

**Jeff Anderson** — Fishers Executive Director

**Rev. Jerry McNamara** — Senior Pastor

You can write to any of these leaders c/o Fishers Of Men Lutheran Church, 2011 Austin Parkway, Sugar Land, TX 77479



**NEXT  
STEPS**

